

# Managing diabetes during the holiday season

The holiday season is synonymous with many things, including food. Family gatherings and holiday office parties wouldn't be the same without great food.

Food plays such a significant role during the holiday season that many people are worried about overindulging. Some celebrants can afford to overindulge, while others must resist temptation. Diabetics fall into the latter category, as the festive mood of the season does not mean people with diabetes can throw dietary caution to the wind. With the holiday season upon us, diabetics can heed the following tips from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to help them stay on a healthy track.

- **Stick to your normal routine.** While the holiday season can be unpredictable, the CDC advises diabetics stick to their normal routines as closely as possible. Because holiday guests cannot control food served to them at family gatherings or parties, the CDC recommends diabetics offer to bring a healthy, diabetic-friendly dish along to any parties. In addition, don't skip meals during the day in anticipation of a large holiday meal. Doing so
- makes it hard to control blood sugar levels.
- **Be extra careful with alcohol.** Alcohol is served or readily available at many holiday gatherings, and many people overindulge because of the festive mood of the season. Overindulging in alcohol is dangerous for anyone, but diabetics must be especially mindful of their alcohol consumption. Alcohol can lower blood sugar and interact with diabetes medicines. Diabetics who want to enjoy a holiday libation should keep their alcohol consumption to a minimum.
- **Eat slowly.** Eating slowly can benefit anyone during the holiday season. Eating at a leisurely pace gives diners' brains ample time to signal that their bodies are full. By eating quickly, diners may be eating more calories than they hoped to eat, and that can lead to uncomfortable feelings of fullness after a meal. Diabetics who can slow down their eating are less likely to overindulge in less healthy holiday foods that can affect their blood sugar levels.
- **Remain active.** The holiday season can be hectic, as adults often must juggle extraordinarily busy social sched-

ules with the responsibilities of everyday life. Many people sacrifice time at the gym to ease the burden of hectic holiday schedules, but diabetics must resist that temptation. The National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases notes that routine physical activity helps diabetics keep their blood glucose levels in their target range. Physical activity also helps the hormone insulin absorb glucose into all of the body's cells for energy. That extra energy boost can help diabetics fend off holiday-related fatigue.

Diabetics face a lot of temptation come the holiday season. But with the right plan of action in place, men and women with diabetes can enjoy a healthy holiday season.



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The availability of sugary treats during the holiday season can tempt diabetics to deviate from their healthy diets.

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